

a man works here and they do the same job, they should be paid the same amount of money. We have tried to do that. The Republicans have filibustered this five times over the last few years.

We are going to offer an amendment to provide sick leave to help families get through tough times. We are going to offer an amendment to ensure that same sex spouses have equal access to Social Security and veterans' benefits. We are going to offer an amendment to relieve the crushing burden of costly student loans. No one has worked harder on this issue than the assistant Democratic leader. I heard him yesterday talk about this at a meeting we had—the crushing, crushing costly student loans. We are going to offer an amendment to address the economic and national security threats posed by climate change.

In the West, we are in the midst of a 15-year drought. This is the 15th year. Lake Powell, the largest manmade lake in America, could go dry very quickly. Hundreds of thousands of acre feet of water will not go into that lake this year because of what is happening up in Colorado.

So when we are done offering what we feel should be ways to improve this dishonest budget that the Republicans put forward, the American people will have no doubt which party stands with the middle class and which stands with the special interests and billionaires. Yes, we have set forth what we believe are our core values, and we believe our core values are what the American people need.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided, and with the Democrats controlling the first half.

The assistant Democratic leader.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S DEATH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was 150 years ago today—150 years ago today—when who is called the last casualty of the Civil War died. He was a man who was born in the Presiding Officer's home State of Kentucky. He grew up for a part of his life in Indiana but spent his formative years in my State of Illinois.

He was a country lawyer, an unlikely Congressman who, because of a political deal, was given a chance to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. He served only 2 years. He brought his family here to Washington for that experience.

They lived just across the street, in a boarding house where the Library of Congress now sits. His family did not like Washington in those days in the 1840s and returned back to his wife's home in Kentucky.

He stayed out here and served in Congress and liked it. He wanted to serve for a longer period of time but was reminded that this was not part of the agreement—only 2 years. So he left Washington, went back to Springfield, IL, practiced law, but continued to aspire to higher office.

In 1858, he ran for the Senate against a man named Steven Douglas. They had historic debates across the State of Illinois. When the votes were finally counted, Douglas was the victor, and this man returned to the practice of law. Just 2 years later, though, he was elected President of the United States.

He came to Washington at one of the most dangerous times in our history. The Civil War had started, and there was a question as to whether the Union could survive, whether the United States of America would survive. This simple country lawyer from what was considered the frontier of America in those days led our Nation during the most dangerous moments in our history.

He watched as more Americans died in that Civil War than in any war that we have ever witnessed. He saw a nation bitterly divided. The war raged on for years. There were moments—bleak and dark moments—when it looked as if the North would fail and the division of the country would begin.

But eventually the North prevailed in a victory that really the American people had given so much to achieve. In April of 1865, this was a tumultuous period. I commend to all of my colleagues a book written by Jay Winik, a Senate staffer entitled “April 1865,” if you want to get a feel for what it was like in America that month.

Many things occurred. The second inaugural address of this President is one of the most beautiful, touching, and moving speeches ever given by a President, where he turned toward the enemy who had fought the North for so many years and basically extended an olive branch when many others would have done just the opposite. “With malice toward none” and with “charity for all,” he gave that speech right outside here—right outside the Senate Chamber on the porch.

Then, in celebration of the victory of the Union, he and his wife attended a play not far from here, at Ford's Theatre. It was there that an assassin took his life. So 150 years ago today, Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States, was assassinated. We have learned a lot from his life, from his leadership, and we enjoy the blessings of liberty and the Union today because that President and the men and women who stood by him saved the Union.

I reflect on this because I come from what is known as Mr. Lincoln's home-

town of Springfield, IL. I am not an expert on Lincoln. I am just a fan, as so many people are, not only across the United States but around the world. I hope we can remember him just for a moment today and reflect on the need for all of us to extend an olive branch to our personal enemies and to our political enemies and try to find how to eliminate an enemy by making a friend, as Lincoln said.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I cannot believe that Loretta Lynch still sits on this Executive Calendar of the Senate. It is put on our desk every day we are in session. She has been on that calendar for a longer period of time than any nominee for Attorney General in the last 30 years.

Senators can vote for or against Loretta Lynch to be Attorney General. That is their right. But an Attorney General nominee whose qualifications and character are unquestionable deserves better than the treatment she is receiving from this Senate. Ms. Lynch deserves a timely vote, just as other Attorney General nominees of other Presidents have received.

She was reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee on February 26 in a bipartisan vote. Nine Democrats and three Republicans voted for this Presidential nominee. She has now been pending on the Senate calendar right here for 48 days—48 days on this calendar. Not one word has been spoken on this floor in derogation of this fine woman, this fine nominee.

The last seven Attorney General nominees combined—all seven of them—had to wait on the Senate floor for a total of 24 days—seven nominees, 24 days. For Loretta Lynch it is 48 days.

The Senate has confirmed other nominees while the human trafficking bill has been pending on the floor. There is no procedural obstacle. While that bill has been pending, the Senate has voted on nominees for Assistant Secretary of Transportation, Assistant Secretary of Commerce, the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, and the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board. And on Monday we voted on a Federal judge. It is routine for the Senate to consider nominees on the Executive Calendar while still considering legislation.

It has been 158 days—more than 5 months—since Ms. Lynch's nomination to be Attorney General was announced. A vote still has not been scheduled. This is far longer than any recent Attorney General nominee has had to wait. Janet Reno waited 29 days. John Ashcroft, a Republican nominee, waited 42 days. Alberto Gonzales, 86 days. Michael Mukasey, 53 days. Eric Holder, 64 days. But when it comes to Loretta Lynch, it is 158 days.

The last Attorney General nominee whose nomination took this long to process was Edwin Meese in 1984, who